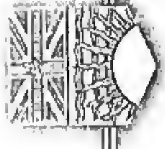
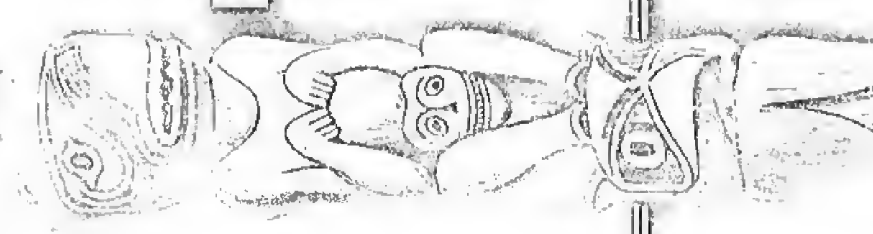


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THUNDERBIRD
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B. C. STUDIES



Land of the Golden Twilight, on the rim of the Great
Unknown;
Land of the painted totem; land of the graven stone;
Wrapped in its mystic folk-lore, yet bright with a
promise new;
Land of To-day and To-morrow—fresh as the morning
dew.

—W. H. C.

Introduction.

Five tribes occupied the Northwest Coast of what is now British Columbia when it first became known to the Spanish and British explorers one hundred and fifty years ago. Until then, the tribes had been isolated from contact with other men for an unknown period of time, due to the mountainous ranges, dense forests, and dangerous seas which hemmed them in. It is believed that they migrated from Asia via Siberia and the Bering Straits some 2,000 years ago; perhaps the last of successive waves of migration which had dispersed themselves all across Canada.

These people still present unsolved problems for the student; such as, for instance, the origin of the many languages and still more numerous dialects which prevented verbal contact between them, aptly described as "a Babel of conflicting tongues." Whence, too, came their outstanding artistic gifts, in some respects unique? How originated their varied and intensely intricate social organizations and elaborate secret society ceremonials?

Names and Locations of these Five Tribes.—The Haida still occupy the Queen Charlotte Islands; a virile, intelligent, fierce, but intensely artistic people. Across the stormy Hecate Straits are the Tsimshian, who shared many of the Haida characteristics. Settled from the coast far inland along the Skeena and Nass Rivers, they were the wealthiest of all these tribes, due to their rich fisheries and access to the fur-bearing animals of the mountains. Thus there developed a great trading centre at the mouth of the Nass—the most important thoroughfare on the coast-line—for throughout this region the tribes were keen traders and gathered annually in large numbers for the exchange of goods, both there and at the mouth of the Fraser.

Adjoining the Tsimshian lands and spreading across to the northern part of Vancouver Island are the Kwakiutl people, whose customs influenced in many ways their more highly artistic and powerful neighbours to the north. Southwards to the Fraser River, and occupying also the southern portion of Vancouver Island, are the more numerous but less virile tribe of the Salish, of which a branch had early established itself in

a small section of the Kwakiutl country, this branch being known as the Bella Coola tribe.

Separated from these other tribes by a densely wooded mountain range, the backbone of Vancouver Island, is the Nootka tribe, courageous hunters of the awe-inspiring whale, familiar by name to all readers of Captain Cook's Voyages or the records of the Spanish adventurers who preceded him.

Types of Shelter and Tribal Customs.—Early explorers noted right-angled wooden houses grouped at intervals along this immense stretch of deeply indented coast with its myriad islands and dangerous seas, built in straight lines on the strip of land between the forest background and the beach on which were drawn up skilfully made canoes. Before many of the houses they saw tall Totem-poles, though in the more southerly areas these were replaced by huge paintings on the house-fronts of similar heraldic figures.

The occupants of these houses, though frequently engaged in tribal wars or raids, or in moving their quarters to the tribal fishing-grounds at certain seasons, nevertheless led relatively settled lives, which no doubt contributed to the high development of their artistic gifts. Fuel and wood for all purposes lay almost at their doors; the sea provided abundant food, easily procured—for they were skilled in all the details of fishing; berries and edible roots were plentiful in their seasons; and sea-mammals, salmon, "candle-fish" (oolichan), secured either locally or by exchange, furnished essential and highly valued fats.

Ingenious Use of Limited Resources.—In other respects, their resources were limited. They had no metals, no clay for pottery, no domesticated animals, no cereals, no cotton, flax, or wool for clothing. Nevertheless these conditions were overcome by ingenuity and determination. They used stone, bone, and horn for highly efficient tools; spruce and cedar trees provided lumber, which could be hewn, carved, or moulded by steam into equipment and utensils of all forms; cedar-bark, shredded and spun, was woven into a form of "cloth" for clothing; spruce and cedar roots were used for skilled basketry, and actually the inner layer of cedar-bark was turned to account for food. The finest fishing-nets were

Six.

woven from prepared nettle-fibres, while animal and sea-mammal sinews and the fibres of shredded kelp fashioned powerful cordage and lashings.

Close Association of Art with Customs and Religion.—In all primitive human societies, religion, art, and life are commingled into a unity which finds an outlet in varied forms of expression, seen in this case at their highest among the Haida and Tsimshian, more grotesquely among the Kwakiutl, and at a much lower level among the Salish and Nootkan peoples. Observation of the assemblage of specimens in this Park will confirm this statement; though actually to appreciate the fact a visit to the Provincial Museum is essential, for there will be seen exquisite specimens of basketry, fine inlays of shell on ivory, elaborate carvings and paintings on wood, bone, horn, and slate, and an infinite variety of designs applied to every weapon, implement, ceremonial equipment, or humble domestic utensil. All this is the more impressive when it is realized that the decorations were executed with only stone or jadeite tools, or the incisor tooth of a beaver.

Fish, birds, and mammals furnished models for myriad designs, imbued with vitality though strictly conventionalized, symbolic and adapted with infinite ability to any shape of surface or contour desired by the artist. It is regrettable that from failure to appreciate these native "skills," many forms have died out, though some recent efforts to stimulate their revival among young Indians to-day indicate that keen tribal imagination, manual dexterity, and artistic gifts are still latent beneath the surface, and might be turned to economic, commercial, and cultural purposes.

Stress laid on Rank and Social Organization.—These tribes were far from being a "simple" people. Class distinctions were rigidly enforced into Nobles, Commoners, and Slaves; to which, among the Tsimshian, Royalty must be added. The ties of kinship were very strong and far-reaching, no marriages between near relatives being permitted. Indeed, the intricacy of their varied social organizations forbids any attempt at generalization; and for the same reason, no concise description of their customs is possible.

"Taboos" were numerous, a fair proportion of which were based on what are now recognized as sound sanitary founda-

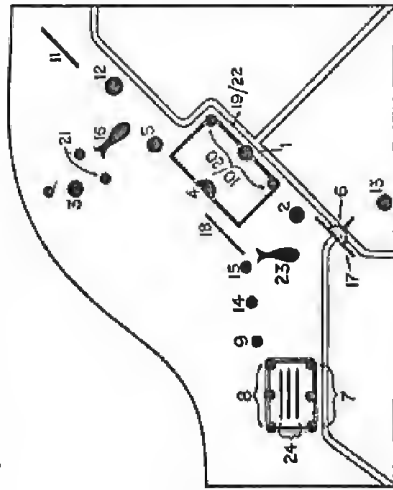
Seven.

tions. Of sanitation in the modern sense there was none, though frequent bathing, fasting, and purgings entered into the preparation for much of their ceremonial life.

Shamans and their Powers.—By all the tribes "Shamans" were credited with magical powers over sickness and many other conditions, imparted to them by supernatural beings. Human bodies, for example, were held to be but the shells in which "souls" dwelt, which could escape from the body in dreams as well as by sickness; but through the agency of a Shaman they could be skilfully recaptured and restored to the owner!

It was due in part to the ill-defined line between the real and the spiritual that the protection of guardian spirits was sought and stressed. The Kwakiutl in particular believed that in the winter season invisible supernatural beings were in very close contact with mankind; hence their custom of dividing the year into two sections, one secular and the other religious.

Legends as a Record of Customs.—In conclusion, it has to be pointed out that a people's mythology is often history seen through primitive minds; a statement true in this case, for much light is thrown upon the otherwise unrecorded habits and organization of these tribes in the thousands of myths and legends collected before they were forgotten by investigators of tribal customs and methods. Passed by word of mouth from the old men to eager children, many of these tales contain useful moral lessons. Here is yet another reason for publication of a selected collection to take the place among Canadian children of the fairy tales from Germany, Denmark, and elsewhere in Europe, upon which the children of former generations exercised their imaginations and incidentally acquired many a useful maxim.



Eight.

REFERENCE NUMBERS TO EXHIBITS IN THUNDERBIRD PARK.

Totem-poles and House-frontal Poles.

1. Haida. Centre of front of house.
2. Haida. Pole standing apart from house.
3. Salish. Pole behind Welcome Figures.
4. Kwakiutl. Heraldic pole formerly in Government House grounds.
5. Kwakiutl. Totem-pole.
6. Bella Coola House-frontal pole.

Inside House-posts.

7. Kwakiutl. Three carved figures.
8. Nootkan. Three carved figures.
9. Nootkan. One carved figure alone outside house.
10. Nootkan. Two carved figures.
11. Salish. Two roughly carved posts.

Mortuary Poles and Grave Figures.

12. Haida. Mortuary pole.
13. Haida. Tree-burial chest.
14. Bella Coola. Grave figure (Bear and Beaver).
15. Bella Coola. Grave figure (Grizzly Bear).
16. Haida. Memorial figure. Whale, 15 ft. 9 in. long.

Painted Ceremonial Screens.

17. Nootkan.
18. Nootkan.

Miscellaneous.

19. Kwakiutl. House-front painting (modern).
20. Haida. Sea-lion head on No. 1.
21. Nootkan. Two "Welcome Figures."
22. Hand-hewn house boards.
23. Kwakiutl Potlatch or Feast Dish.
24. Three canoes.

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Nine.

Thunderbird Park.

Name-post.

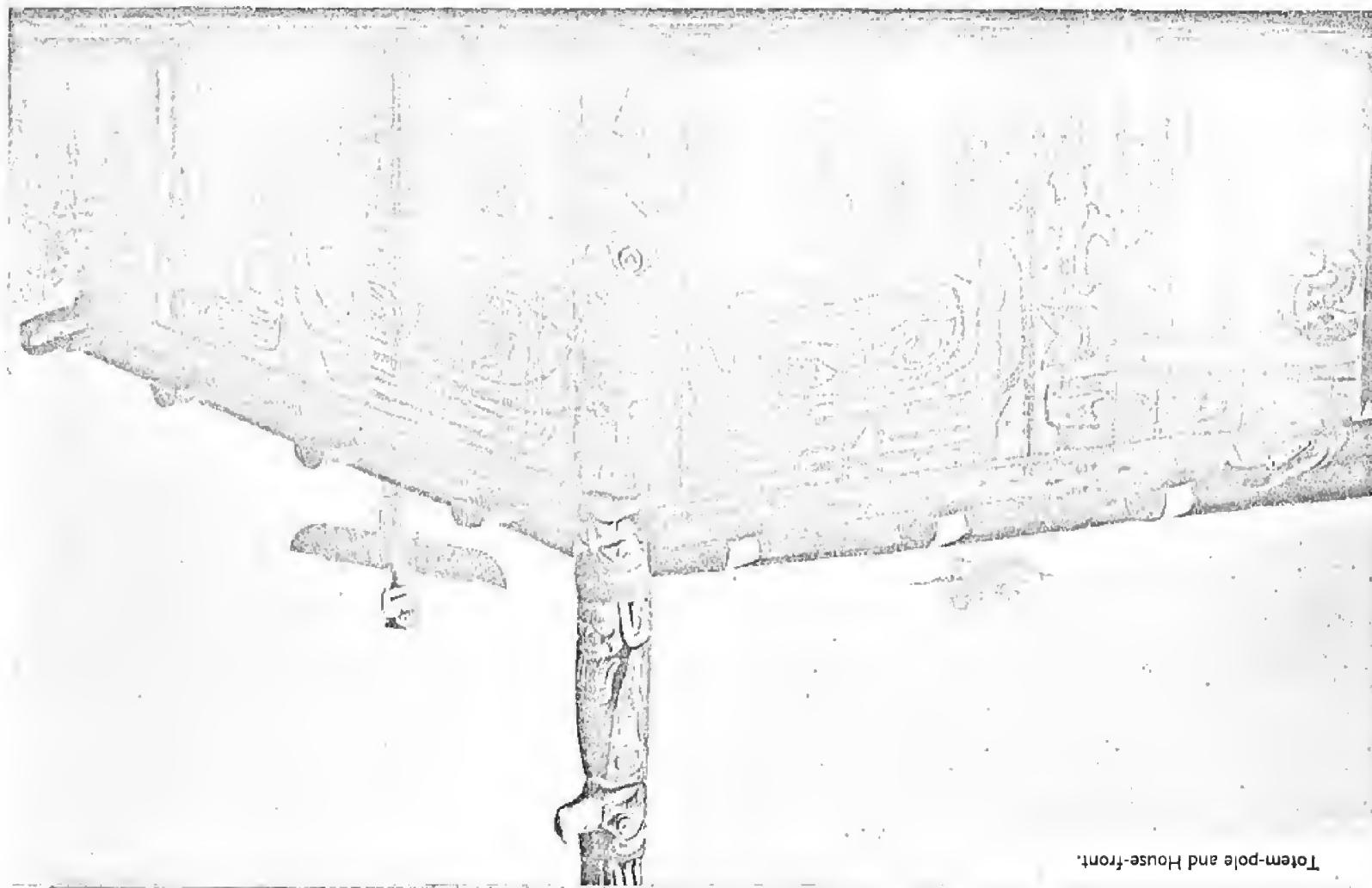
The post bearing the name of the park incorporates two figures very commonly mentioned in the folk-tales of the Indians of this coast and often shown in their designs.

The larger figure is "Sis-u-tl," the two-headed snake, shown with teeth bared and tongues extended. A few of the powers attributed to this monster are noted in connection with "Inside House-poles."

Traditions referring to the Thunderbird have been traced among the Indian Tribes all across Canada and also in the United States, but there is good reason to believe that its fullest and most authentic association is with the Nootka Tribe on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Everywhere surviving legends describe its great strength, and account for thunder as caused by the flapping of its mighty wings, and that lightning is the result of flashes from its eyes; though nowhere else is to be traced the distinctive Nootkan association between this giant bird and the formidable whale. For example, the Spanish explorers, Captains Galiano and Valdez, recorded in 1792 that Tetasca, a Nootkan Chief, drew for them a picture of what he assured them he had personally seen, namely, the descent of this huge bird from the skies close to his own house. It resembled an eagle but having two horns on its head. Seizing a mighty whale out of the ocean, it carried it off in its powerful talons, presumably to consume at its leisure up in the Clayuquot Mountains, where a great accumulation of the skeletons of whales confirmed his conviction that it made its home. It is true that scientists whisper that this accumulation is associated with a geological upheaval in the dim past, connected with the volcanic history of Vancouver Island; but be this as it may, there is no doubt Thunderbird celebrations took precedence of all others with the Nootkans, and it is even asserted that it instructed human beings on this Island how to build their first house.

Very fine house-front paintings depicting a whale helpless in the talons of a Thunderbird attracted the attention of all early adventurers on the west coast and is the subject of perhaps the finest of all surviving grave monuments in the form

Eleven.



Totem-pole and House-front.

of a carving measuring approximately 30 feet in length and 20 feet in height, still to be seen at Friendly Cove, Nootka Sound.

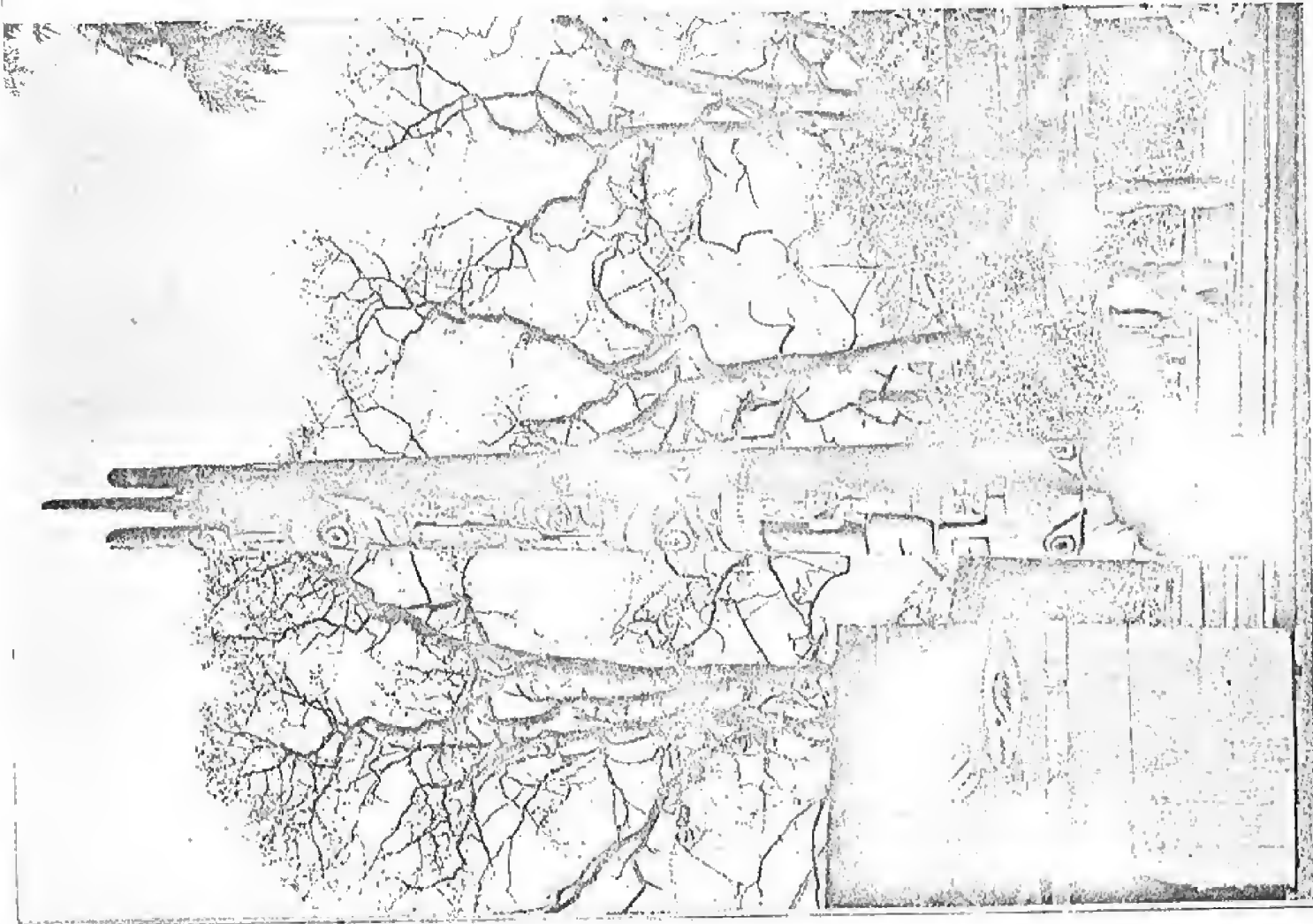
A more conventional representation is painted on the Ceremonial screens, Numbers 17 and 18. Number 17 includes a third member of the group known as the Lightning Snake, which is referred to frequently as being used by the Thunderbird as a harpoon. Carried under his wing or tied round his waist it could be easily launched at the formidable prey and kill it without further effort by the captor.

The Nootkan was the only tribe on the Northwest Coast which hunted whales in their frail "dug-out" canoes; an enterprise calling for great courage and preceded by weeks of preparatory fastings, purgings, prayers and other ceremonies. Some authorities find reason to believe that the root of the whole legend is found in combats between tribes bearing the names respectively of the two creatures, in which that of the Thunderbird was victorious.

Number 1. Totem-pole and House-front.

This house-front combines examples of the contrasting work of three tribes—the Haida, the Nootkan, and the Salish. The totem-pole brought from Tanoo, Queen Charlotte Islands, shows a fine example of Haida skill in the bold outlines of the figures, enabling their significance to be easily seen by a stranger approaching from some distance. Thirty-eight feet in height, three figures are carved at its summit, wearing indications of their high rank in the five rings depicted on their hats. They stand on the head of an Eagle (recognized by the downward curved beak), while immediately below a human figure possibly shows the owner of the pole. On his breast is carved a Frog, the representative of wisdom and a principal crest of the Edensaw Chiefs among the Haida. The large figure at the base represents a Killer Whale, the small head of the inverted human figure above portrays the whale's blow-hole; and the tail is turned upwards from the base of the pole. The projecting cedar beams supporting a part of the roof structure are carved to show Sea-lions, Number 20; also Haida workmanship.

Thirteen.



Haida Heraldic or Totem Pole.

The rough-hewn figures (Number 10) at each corner are actually "Inside House-poles" of Nootkan origin. They were brought from Sarita on Barkley Sound. This is the only type of pole used by this tribe. The vertical house-boards, Number 22, are hand-hewn by the Salish Indians of Discovery Island, the painted design which covers them being modern work.

Number 2. Haida Pole standing apart from House.

Number 2 shows an outstanding specimen of Haida skill in the elaborate carving lavished upon this 38-foot-high Heraldic or Totem Pole. The figures at the summit wear dance hats showing the rings indicative of high rank, and below a succession of animal and bird representations are either crests or illustrative of ancestors' feats in their acquirement. The Raven, Eagle, Bear, and Frog are all shown; the Bear at the base being again distinguished by indications of his high status. Possibly the pole was originally somewhat higher, as the suggestion of an entrance at the base is too low to permit the passing within of an adult, and may have been reduced when the pole was moved from its original position at Cumsheewa, Queen Charlotte Islands, whence it was collected in 1901.

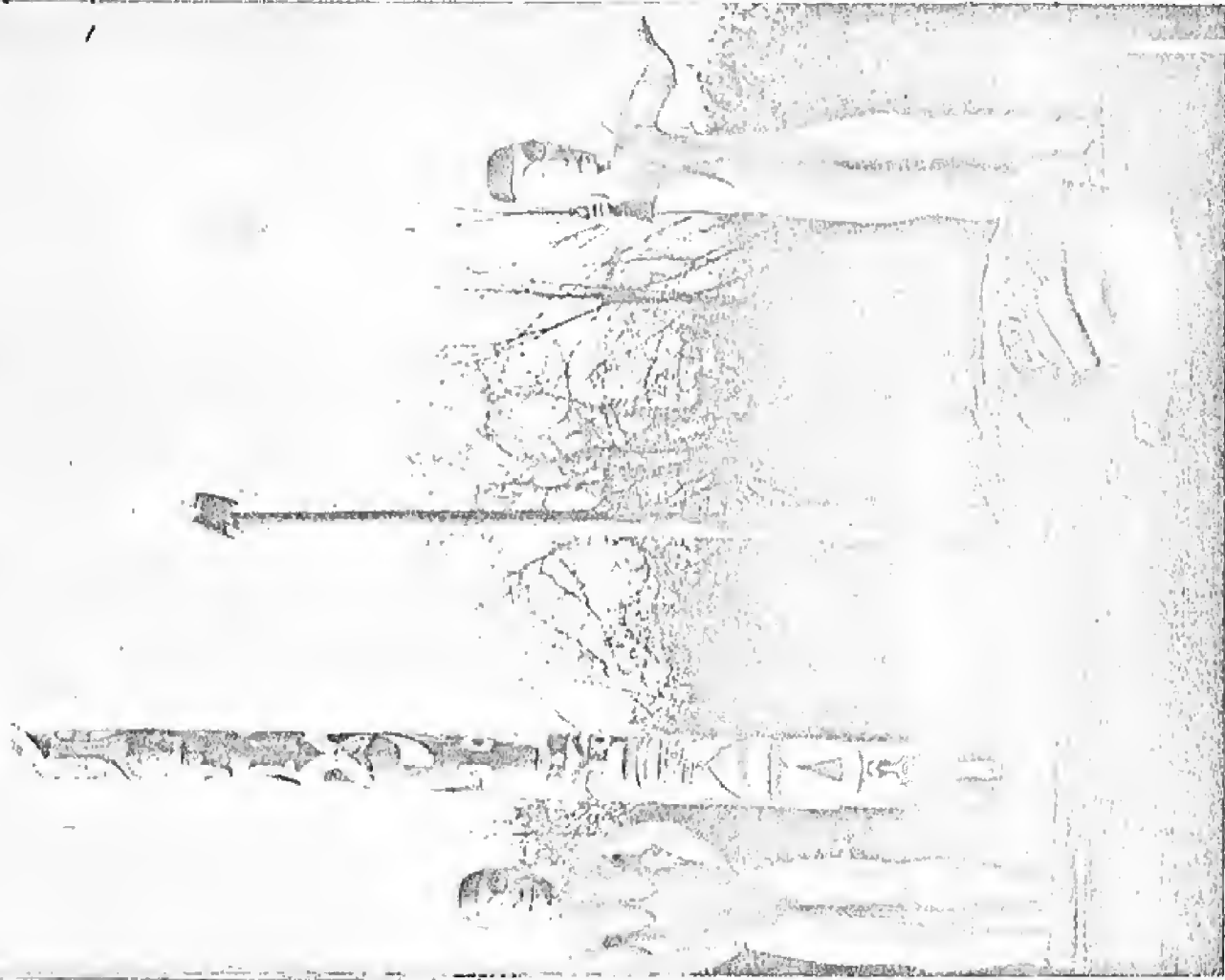
Number 3. Salish Pole behind Welcome Figures.

The tall pole in the background behind the Welcome figures, Number 21, is the modern work of Salish Indians, of the Songhees Reserve near Victoria. The upper figures represent a Raven standing on a Bear, supported by a Killer Whale. Below these are a human figure and a Mink. The tribe did not in the past employ these poles nor compete in skill with the Haida, Tsimshian, and Kwakiutl.

The human figure holds a "Sis-u-tl" head, and around his waist is a belt of "Sis-u-tl" skin, supposed to endow the wearer with magical powers and to make him invincible in battle. The Mink was a particularly powerful "medicine" or charm, possession of which enabled its owner to walk safely under water.

Another pole near by supports the carving of an Eagle, possibly part of a Grave or Memorial Pole.

Fifteen.



"Welcome Figures."

Number 4. Kwakiutl Heraldic Pole.

Number 4 shows an Heraldic Pole carved by a member of the Kwakiutl Tribe. It was collected at Quatsino in 1913 and stood formerly in the grounds of Government House, Victoria, B.C. Painted sparsely black and red it offers a good example of the coarse but effective carving of this tribe. The shape of the top suggests that it was originally designed to support the roof-beams within a Chief's house. The uppermost figure is that of a Raven embracing a human figure, possibly that of the owner of the pole; below is a Grizzly Bear with a fish in his mouth and a large Killer Whale (note the high dorsal fin) between his paws.

This pole stands 15 feet 6 inches high and has a diameter of 3 feet 6 inches.

Number 5. Kwakiutl Totem-pole.

This totem-pole is a sample of Kwakiutl carving, very simple in detail; it was brought from Dsawadi, B.C., in 1914, and stands 27 feet 8 inches in height, measuring in thickness 30 by 26 inches. The uppermost figure is that of the mythical Mountain Hawk (note the beak curved back between the lips of the human mouth by which this bird is distinguished from either the Eagle or Raven). It is poised on the head of Dos-no-qwa, the "Wild Woman of the Woods," and below stands the owner of the pole holding his "Chief's Copper" which doubtless originally showed his crest in the upper half and the indication of authenticity in the form of a bevelled "T" in the lower half of the highly valued possession.

These "Coppers" varied in length from 4 inches to 4 feet and represented very high value as they had to be imported at great cost from Alaska and possibly Siberia. It is on record that one Chief paid many thousand blankets for his purchase, and the cost of another example amounted to one hundred elk-skins, eighty boxes of "candle-fish" (colichan) grease, a large canoe of fine workmanship, and eight slaves.

Genuine old "Coppers" had individual names to permit of identification if stolen, lost through accident, or carried off in an enemy raid; for example, "Means of Strife," or "the Copper that is like a Cloud." They also play prominent parts in many legends. The copper was not polished but blackened

Seventeen.



Kwakiutl Heraldic Pole.

by a secret process which prevented erosion. The T-shaped bevelled indentation without which no "Copper" was considered authentic was called by the Haida the "taow" or backbone of the "Copper."

Number 6. Bella Coola House-frontal Pole.

A totem-pole of value from Bella Coola is placed against a background formed from the work of the Nootka Tribe, which consists of a screen painting, Number 17, showing two groups of the Thunderbird, Whale, Lightning Snake, and also a small mythical creature. This screen is supported on a fine specimen of careful hand-wrought tool-work (Number 22), a section of a great red-cedar log brought from the North Saanich Reserve near Victoria. It affords an illustration of the careful work expended upon it; good workmanship being a cardinal principle among the North-west Coast tribes.

The outstanding figure on this house-frontal pole is the Raven Crest, the bird's beak measuring 14 feet in length, above which is a small Beaver. The carvings below show Seals, which find a place in local legends. Further interest is added to this pole in that the back of the huge cedar log from which it is carved has been hollowed out to reduce its great weight when being raised into position by man-power alone; a practical custom quite usual among these people. The doorway at the base forms the entrance to the house.

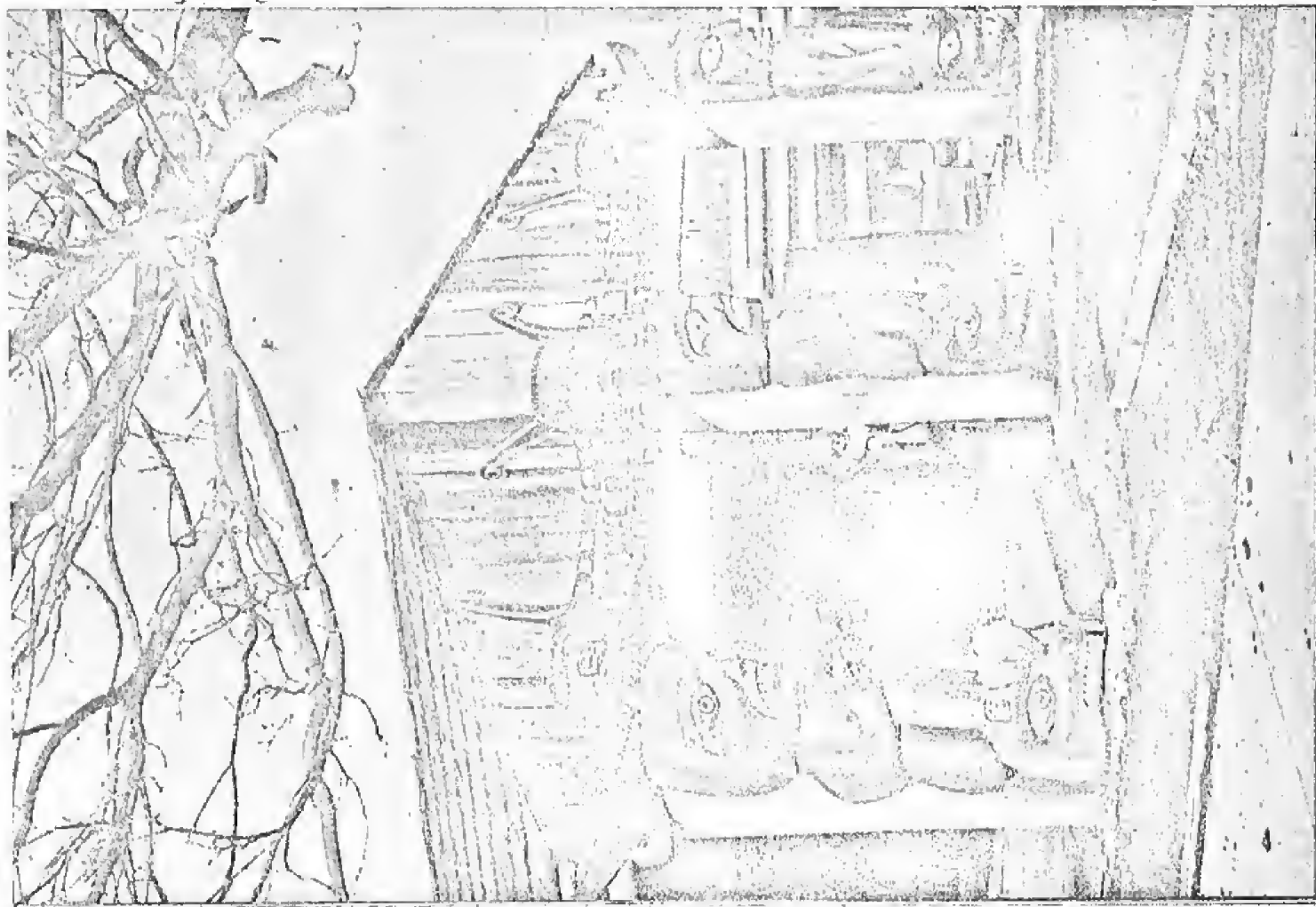
Number 7. Inside House-posts.

The three Inside House-poles which are employed to support the fine painted representation of the "Sis-u-tl" or Double-headed Snake, Number 19, were carved by a member of the Kwakiutl Tribe and show "Dos-no-qwa," the much-feared mythical "Wild Woman of the Woods," who was credited among other bad deeds with preying upon little children. She appears in Tsimshian and Kwakiutl legends and survives in Ceremonial Masks, always painted black, as well as in the forms here shown, where she is seated on a bear. It was a usual custom to carve the same figure on each Inside House-pole. The characteristic house-front carving of the "Sis-u-tl," Number 19, is an excellent representation of this legendary creature; namely, with a head and protruding tongue at either end in profile and a central head, full face,

Nineteen.



Bella Coola House-frontal Pole.



Inside House-posts.

with its double horns. This fabulous snake was supposed to be able to assume the form of a fish, which caused death if eaten or touched by ordinary persons. But to those who enjoyed supernatural protection, "Sis-u-tl" gave great power. The touch of its blood made the skin hard as stone; it could become a canoe, propelled by its fins; and its eyes, thrown from a sling, could kill whales.

Numbers 8 and 9. Three Carved Figures.

The three poles supporting the rear of the building were carved by the Nootkan Indians, near Ucluelet, on the west coast of Vancouver Island, and a fourth stands alone immediately outside.

Number 10 (see Number 1).

Number 11 (see Name-post).

Number 12. Mortuary Pole.

This example was boldly carved by the Haida Indians of Tanoo, Queen Charlotte Islands, and shows a variation of the form of Tree Burial. A section was removed from a solid cedar log (sometimes more than 4 feet in diameter and 30 feet in height) near the top of the pole and to the front, in which was deposited the chest containing the body folded up in small compass. A wide horizontal board was fastened over the opening, this board being often carved with the crests of the dead man; in this case the mythical Mountain Hawk, often shown in association with the Moon, which was credited with power to assume bird form at will.

On the pole itself the Raven appears without his characteristic straight beak, the reason being set forth in more than one legend. He clasps between his wings the rings of cedar-fibre dyed red, indicative of steps up in rank belonging to the human head below; possibly the dead man was thus commemorated. An admirable representation of the well-known Beaver forms the base of the pole. Note the prominence of the huge incisor teeth, recognized symbol of this animal, the turned-up scaly tail and the forepaws clasping the stick, which tradition says is all that remains for the subsistence of beavers since crafty Raven returned their generous hospitality by the

Twenty-one.

theft of the lake containing an unfailing supply of salmon which was attached to the Beaver House where he was saved from starvation.

Number 13. Haida Tree-burial Chest.

The varied methods employed in the disposal of their dead offers an excellent illustration of the impossibility of generalizing about any custom found among the tribes of this Province; indeed in this case, they varied among sections of each tribe, or were controlled by the rank of the dead man. The practice of "Tree Burial" was found among the Haida, Kwakiutl, and Nootkan Indians. The body was folded on itself within the cedar chest; the crest of the deceased person being often painted on the exposed side, as shown in this case. The chest was placed high up in the tree, from which the lower branches were all removed to make the chest inaccessible. The Bella Coola and Coast Salish often raised these burial chests on high posts. It is of interest to note that cremation was also customary with the Tsimshian and certain tribes of the Interior of the Province.

Number 14. Bella Coola Grave Figure.

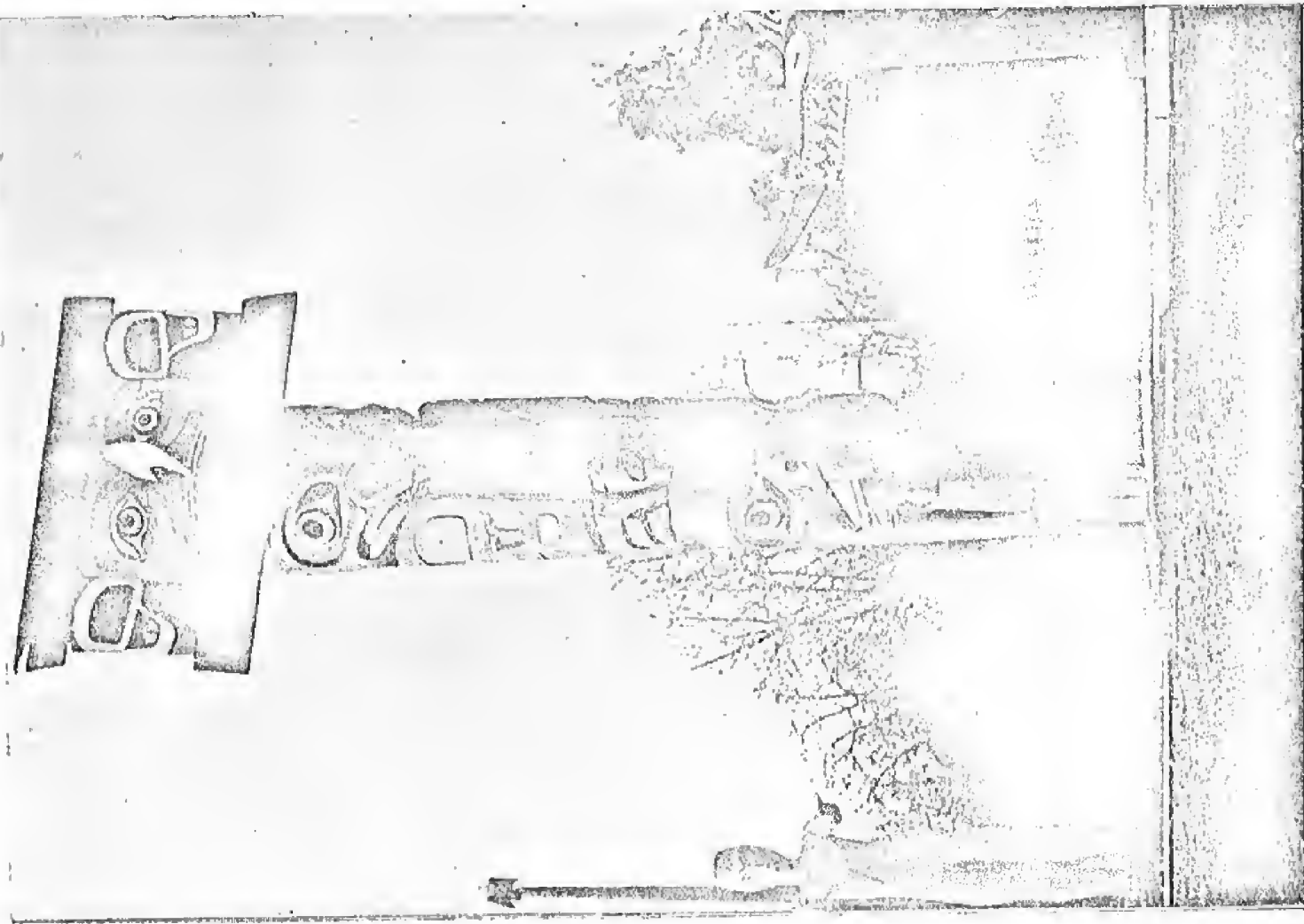
The grave figure to the left of the screen represents a Bear with a Beaver on its head. This figure comes from Bella Coola. It probably signifies that the deceased belonged to the Grizzly Bear family and married into the Beaver family.

The use of grave figures has been noted over the whole area from Washington State to the Yukon. Among the more northern tribes, the Haida and Kwakiutl for instance, these usually took the form of an animal or bird, whereas among the Salish people and the Déné in the Interior of the Province they were generally more or less roughly carved in human form.

Number 15. Bella Coola Grave Figure.

Number 15 is another grave figure from Bella Coola, representing a Grizzly Bear. According to one Indian legend, this bear was a member of the Cannibal House and was provided with an additional eye in each forepaw.

Twenty-three.



Mortuary Pole.

Number 16. Haida Memorial Figure.

This is a fine Haida memorial carving from Tanoo, Queen Charlotte Islands, 15 feet 9 inches in length, representing a Killer Whale with its symbolic large dorsal fin.

Numbers 17 and 18. Nootkan Painted Ceremonial Screens.

Both these screens show Nootkan representations of the Thunderbird and Whale, Number 18, highly conventionalized and also primitive, is supported by three posts.

Number 17 is more highly finished and elaborate in detail.

Number 19 (see Number 7).

Number 20 (see Number 1).

Number 21. Welcome Figures.

The two figures representing humans with outstretched arms are known as "Welcome Poles." Similar figures, though smaller, were fairly common along the coast, but these are the only known figures of large size. They were erected originally by Nootkan Indians at Ohlat, Barkley Sound, on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Welcome Figures were only roughly carved to "welcome" the numerous guests invited to celebrate a feast or potlatch.

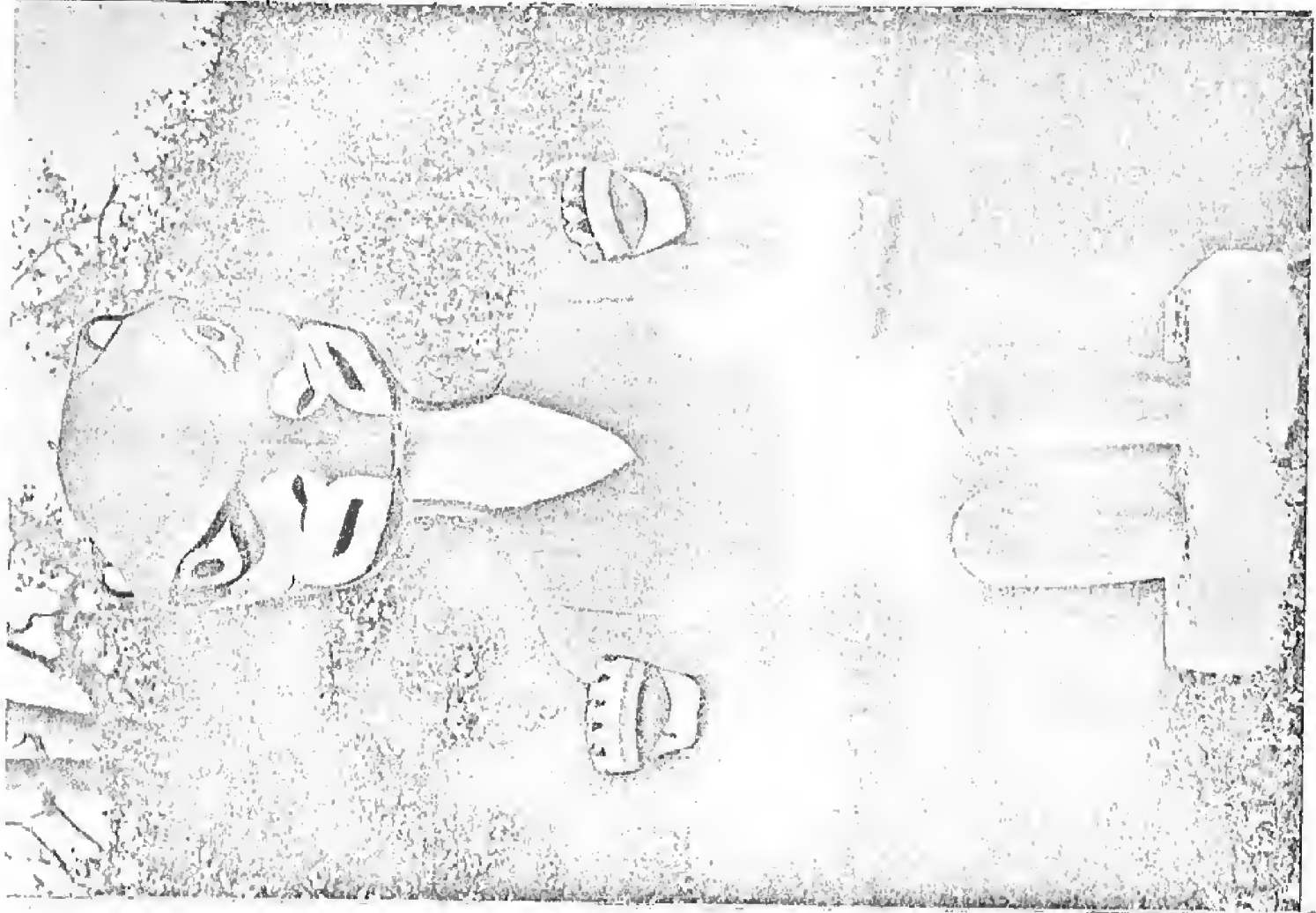
Number 22 (see Number 6).

Number 23. Kwakiutl Potlatch or Feast Dish.

These dishes, formed from solid logs hollowed and painted, measured from 5 to 10 feet in length, having the inside receptacle always shaped like a canoe, as hospitality demanded that nothing less than a canoe full of fish-oil, broth, or other food, could be offered by the host to his guests. The exterior of these remarkable dishes, which were provided with ladles over 3 feet in length, were carved to represent some animal, such as a Wolf or a Bear, or as in this case a Whale. This dish comes from the Kwakiutl Tribe at Uclataw, B.C.; it is distinguished by the unusual feature that when opened it shows two receptacles.

Visitors often inquire as to the meaning of the word "Potlatch" and the significance of its customs. The origin of the word is traced to the word "gift" in Nootkan, though actually the custom of these celebrations is said to have originated with

Twenty-five.



Bella Coola Grave Figure.

the Kv iutl. The variations in detail are too intricate to describe, though the giving and receiving of gifts was a prominent feature in all cases. Recent research, for instance, describes at least five types of Potlatch among the Haida alone.

One characteristic was common to all Potlatches, namely, their concern with rank, status, and acquirement of new tribal names, or of regaining any loss of status or of removing any slur on honour. In some cases they were given to indicate a step up in rank for the child of the giver, as in the case of an adopted child, which could thus attain the rank of its foster parents; but an illegitimate child could never acquire status by this or any other means.

Among the Haida the highest and most costly type was that known as the "House-building" Potlatch; next in order came the "Totem-pole" Potlatch, only half as costly to the giver but conferring less than half the prestige and status. The third form, the "Funeral or Mortuary Pole" Potlatch conferred but one-tenth of that of the "House-building" Potlatch, while still lower in value came the "Vengeance" Potlatch, by celebration of which a man or woman of high rank could recover status lost by insult or by any imputation on their honour. Last in order was the "Face-saving" Potlatch, given after a person of high social status had suffered an undignified mishap which caused ridicule among onlookers, or if the child of such parents tumbled on a path or fell into the water from a canoe and was helped or rescued by a member of another Clan.

Potlatches are now illegal, though they undoubtedly had good qualities, encouraging thrift to amass the essential gifts. However, one serious result was the deplorable debts incurred in attempts to outdo rivals in distribution of gifts. Nevertheless, so strong were family ties that these debts were scrupulously repaid by relations even to the second and third generation, often at the cost of dire poverty meanwhile. But ill-feelings and feuds were also caused, while other abuses crept in which led to their abolition by the Indian Affairs Office.

Number 24. Three Canoes.

Three canoes of various types are suspended from the rafters of No. 7.

Twenty-seven.

A NOTE ON TOTEM AND OTHER POLES.

A frequent inquiry from visitors to Victoria is what Totem-poles stand for? Were these quaint carved figures worshipped as idols? What is the meaning of the word?

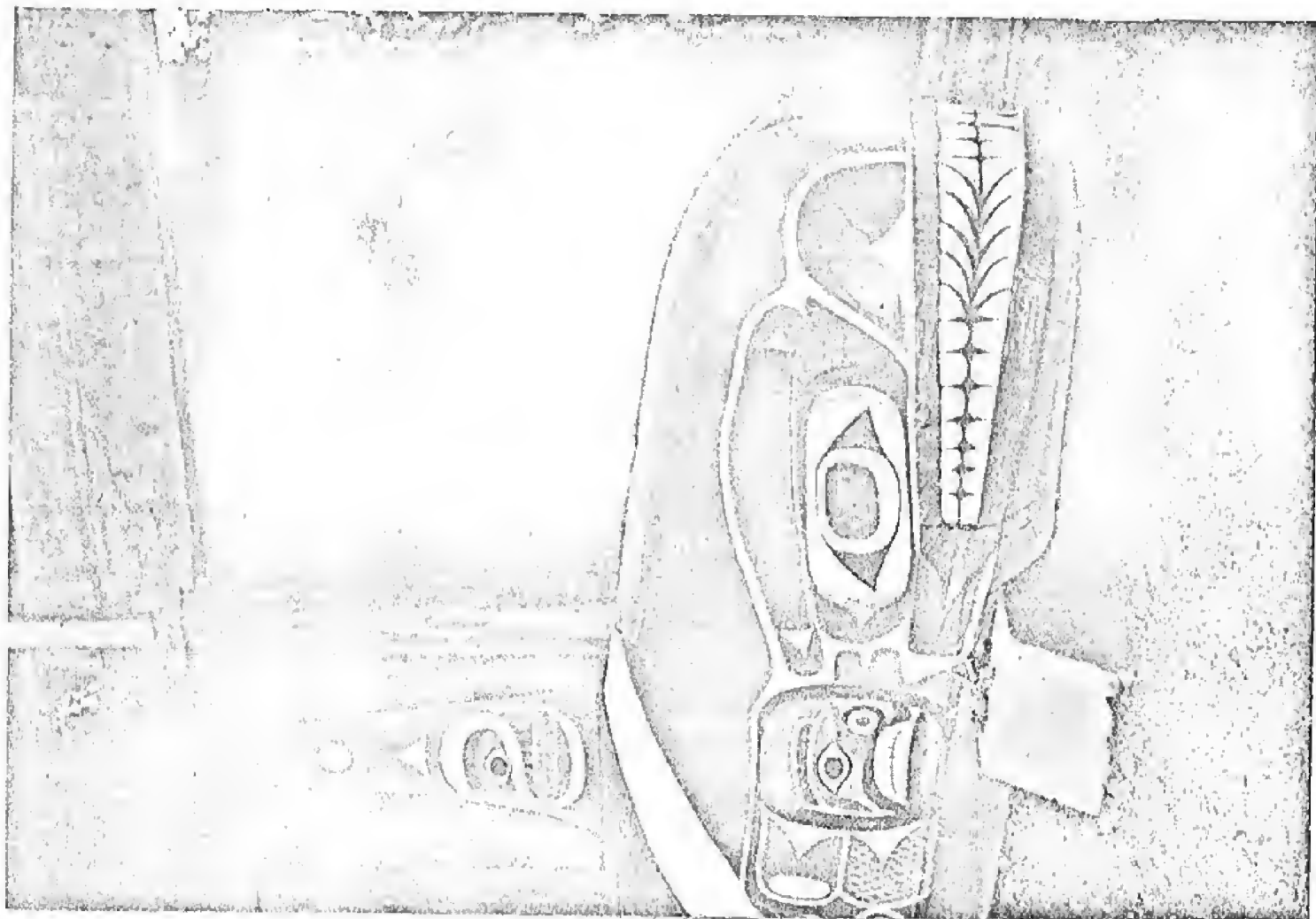
The word itself dates back, it appears, about 150 years, when a writer named Long, who visited this Coast, used it to describe the guardian spirit, or protector of a person, clan, or tribe which he learned was acquired by youths during their period of severe preparation for the responsibilities of manhood, when exhausted by hunger and cold, exposed to unknown dangers, this mythical spirit or that appeared for their assistance in their feverish dreams, in the form of some familiar bird or animal, and was adopted henceforth as their guardian and represented as their highly valued Crest. These people never worshipped idols; indeed the Eagle or Bear, Frog or Wolf, which became their life-long guardian, might be hunted, eaten, or destroyed without scruple, though in some cases after apologies for the deed.

Four types of Poles were in use by these tribes. They were made from immense solid logs of red cedar, sparsely painted with black, dull red, or a little green or blue; the rest of the pole having its rough surfaces merely adzed with considerable care.

(1.) **Totem or Heraldic House-frontal Poles** were restricted to the Haida and Tsimshian Tribes, though found to a much lesser extent among the Kwakiutl (Figs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6). They were symbols of rank, wealth, social standing, or achievement—all of vital importance in the social organization of these tribes. Carved with one or more of the owner's Crests, they sometimes included one of his wife's; for both Haida and Tsimshian reckoned descent in the female line, and women could be and were at times Chiefs. Totem and House-frontal Poles were costly to erect; skilled and highly remunerated artists might be summoned from a distance to carve them, and the process of erection was strenuous, engaging large numbers of men, women, and children.

These poles also served another useful purpose, that of guides to strangers approaching a village. The bold carving, in which the Haida specially excelled, seen from a distance

Twenty-nine.



Kwakiutl Potlatch or Feast Dish.

by a keen-sighted visitor informed him to what family or Tribe the owner belonged. They corresponded to the Coat of Arms on the shields of Crusaders or blazoned in the vast halls of castles in the Middle Ages; and are still engraved in inconspicuous forms on the official communications of National Governments or municipal authorities.

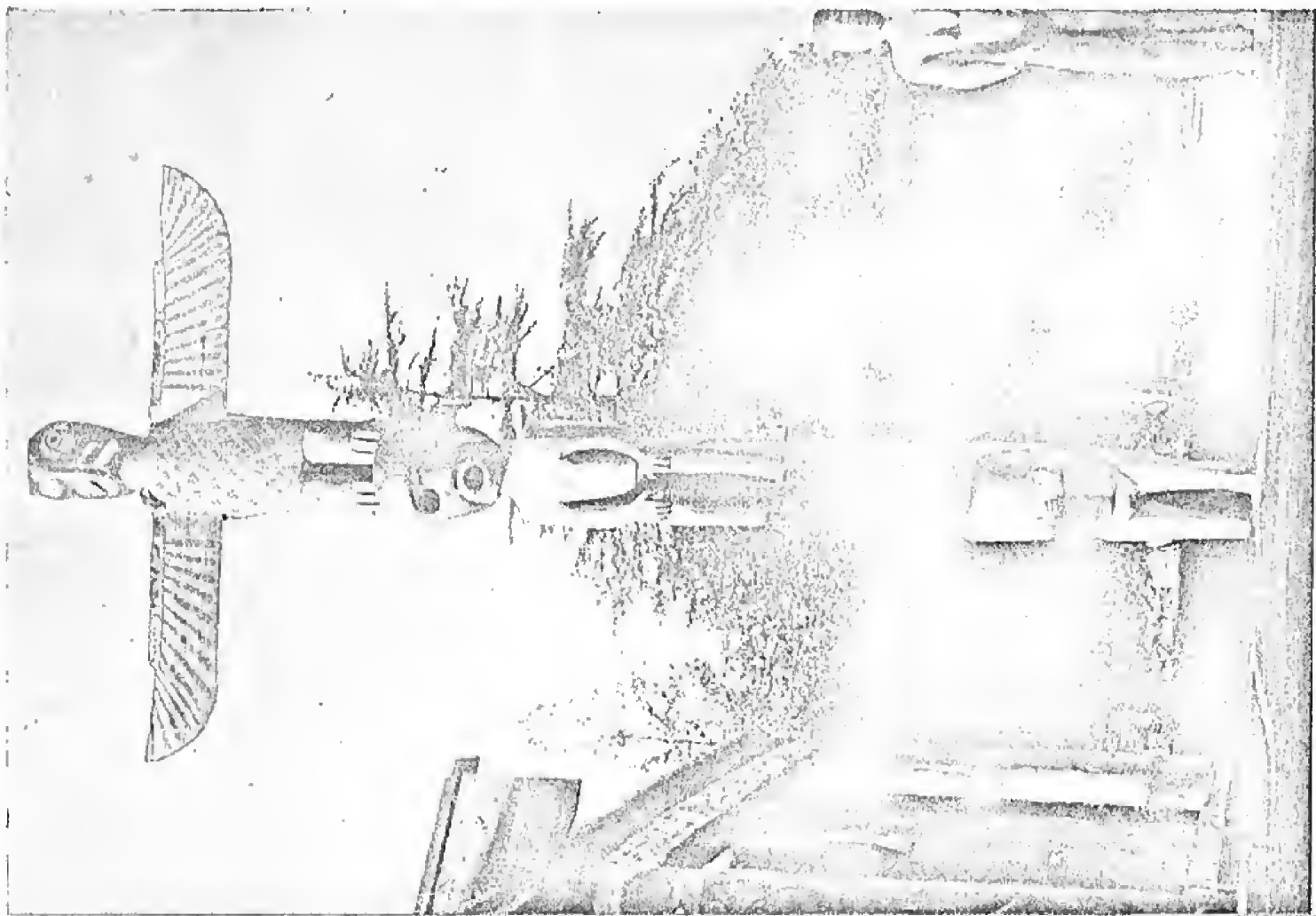
Valuable specimens of Totem-poles are rare, though actually they only reached their highest perfection about a century ago; but the soft cedar wood of this Coast decays rapidly in the damp climate, so that unless protected (as are those fortunately preserved in Museums) their lives are at most sixty or seventy years. The most representative survivals are found far inland on the Upper Skeena River among the Gitksan Tribe of the Tsimshian. The much-advertised poles at Alert Bay only date back about forty-five years. The origin of this remarkable form of plastic art is still undetermined. Unquestionably it was preceded by much more widespread House-front paintings.

(2.) **Memorial Poles** are also carved with one or more Individual or Clan Crests and are frequently confused with Totem-poles. They were, however, erected by the heirs of the deceased person whose Crests are carved on the pole, probably an important member of his Clan or Tribe. This type of pole was that in principal use by the Tsimshian Tribe.

(3.) **Mortuary Poles** form a third class (Fig. 12) in which a section of the top of a solid log, often over 4 feet in diameter, was removed to receive a chest containing the body. This form of pole and burial was confined to the Haida Tribe, Queen Charlotte Islands.

(4.) **Inside House-poles** (Figs. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11) are by far the most numerous of all these forms of pole, being found in most villages from Victoria, B.C., to the Lynn Canal in Alaska. They were used to support the long, heavy beams in the large communal houses on which rested the slender roof-poles. In the northern area these poles were often elaborately carved (very fine specimens are to be seen in the entrance hall of the Provincial Museum). They might show either the owner's crests or possibly illustrate some ancestral legend. They were in these cases placed centrally at the far

Thirty-one.



Kwakiutl Totem-pole.

end of the house, opposite the entrance; but only great wealth permitted such indulgence. The majority were more or less roughly carved. Those on view in this Park come from the Nootkan and Salish Tribes and show the rough work of people whose artistic ability never approached that of the Haida or Tsimshian. Some represented spirits seen by their owner, but many were left undecorated; very few were painted, though they served well their function as supports.

* * * * *

An interesting relic is the old "Tilikum," a remodelled Indian canoe in which Captain John C. Voss circumnavigated the world. A brief synopsis of his extraordinary voyage is posted near the canoe.

THE OLD HELMCKEN RESIDENCE.

Adjoining Thunderbird Park is one of the oldest pioneer homes in Victoria. This was the residence of Dr. J. S. Helmcken, the first Speaker of the Vancouver Island Legislative Assembly and an outstanding figure in the early life of the City, Island, and Province. Built originally in 1852, the house is now the property of the Provincial Government. Fortunately, most of the original furnishings have been preserved, which has made it possible to restore the house as it was in the Doctor's day. It will be opened shortly to the public as an historical museum.

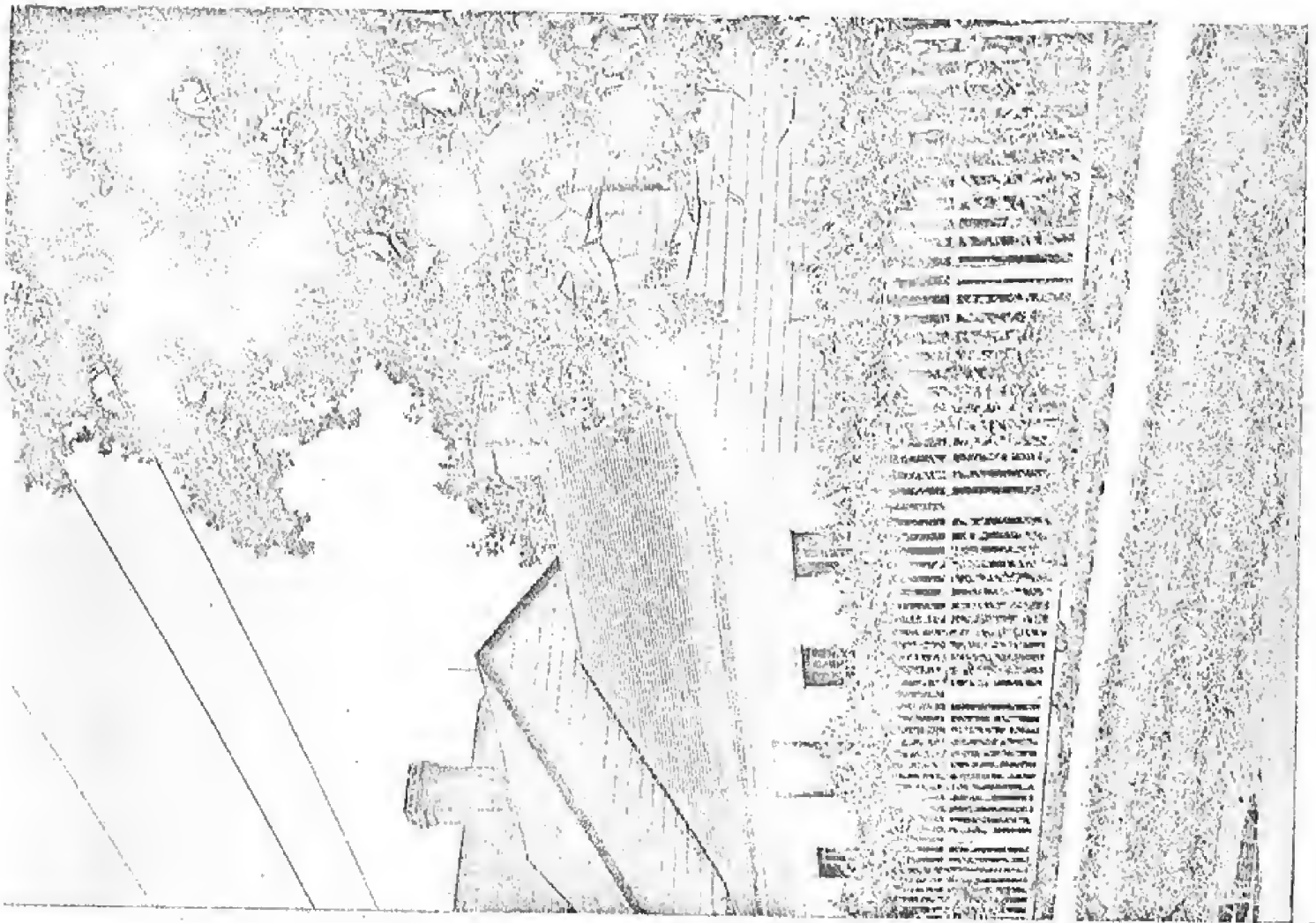
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Thirty-three.

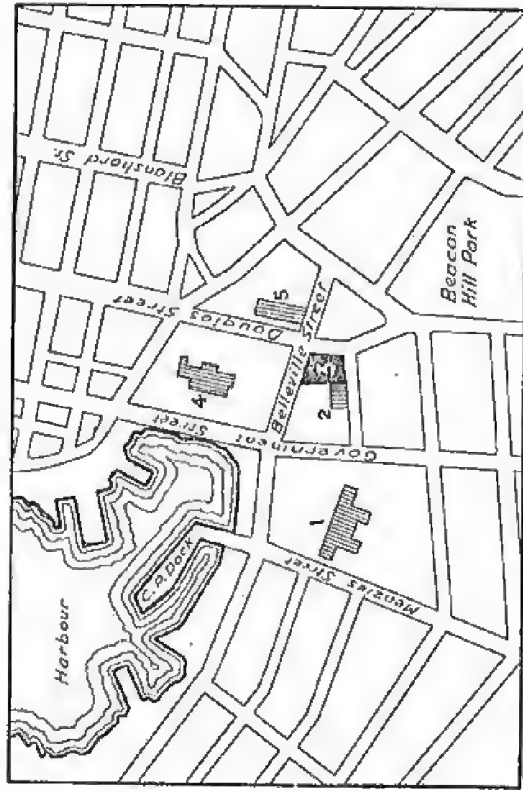


Tree-burial Chest.

The "Tilikum."



The Old Helmcken Residence.



1. Parliament Buildings. 2. The Old Helmcken Home. 3. Thunderbird Park.
4. Empress Hotel. 5. Crystal Garden.



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